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Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 21 of Security Council resolution 1769 (2007) of 31 July 2007, by which the Council requested me to report every 90 days on the progress, and to report on any obstacles to: (a) the deployment of the light and heavy support packages and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID); (b) the implementation of the joint communiqué of the Government of the Sudan and the United Nations on the facilitation of humanitarian activities in Darfur; (c) the political process; (d) the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement and the parties' compliance with their international obligations and their commitments under relevant agreements; and (e) the ceasefire and the situation on the ground in Darfur. The report covers developments since August 2007.

II. Deployment of the light and heavy support packages and the Hybrid Operation

A. Light support package

2. The light support package, which was developed jointly with the African Union pursuant to resolution 1706 (2006), consists of 105 military staff officers, 33 police advisers, 48 civilian staff, 360 night-vision goggles, 36 global positioning systems, 8 fly-away kits, public information equipment and 36 armed personnel carriers. The entirety of the light support package has been deployed to the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS).

3. Military staff officers who are part of the light support package are providing support for the establishment of the joint operations centre, the joint mission analysis centre and the joint logistics centre. The police advisers authorized under the light support package are deployed to El Fasher, Nyala and Geneina, and are actively assisting the AMIS police component in its efforts to strengthen command and control structures, improve monitoring and reporting systems and establish mechanisms to address gender-based violence.

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B. Heavy support package

4. The heavy support package, which was agreed upon with the African Union pursuant to resolution 1706 (2006), consists of 2,250 military personnel, 301 police advisers, 3 formed police units and 1,136 civilian personnel.

5. On 24 November, 135 of the 335 personnel of the multi-role engineer and well-drilling company from China arrived in Nyala. Owing to delays in the inland transportation of the engineering equipment from Khartoum to Nyala, the unit is not yet operational. The equipment is expected to arrive by the end of December. The cargo readiness date for the main body of the unit has yet to be provided, and the unit's full deployment is expected by the end of March 2008.

6. All other countries contributing military personnel to the heavy support package have undertaken reconnaissance visits to Darfur, and pending the successful completion of these assessments, more units will commence deployment early in 2008. Current estimates indicate that one multi-role engineer company (335), one medium transport unit (150) and one signals company (185), all from Egypt, will deploy by mid-February 2008.

7. A number of other critical capabilities are expected to deploy by the end of March 2008, including one multi-role logistics company (300) from Bangladesh; one multi-role engineers company (335), one level III hospital (120) and subject to predeployment visits — one aerial reconnaissance unit, all from Pakistan; and one level II hospital (60) from Nigeria. In addition, one utility helicopter unit (200) and one light tactical helicopter unit (160), both from Jordan, were to deploy by November 2007, however these offers were withdrawn following the reconnaissance visit to Darfur.

8. With regard to the police component of the heavy support package, 87 of 301 individual officers have arrived in Darfur and are supporting AMIS in the area of operational planning, logistics and human resource management. Over 200 additional police officers are on travel status and are scheduled to arrive in December and January. The first formed police unit under the heavy support package, from Bangladesh, arrived in Nyala on 21 November. It will be joined by approximately 100 individual police officers and a second formed police unit from Nepal by February 2008. In addition, 785 of 1,143 authorized civilian personnel have been deployed to the mission area, including 285 international staff and 522 national staff.

9. The implementation of the heavy support package has been delayed by the security situation, administrative obstacles, logistical challenges and the readiness of troop contributors, among other factors. Specifically, gaps in the availability of water and land and the capacity of both military and contracted engineers to build camps continue to constrain the pace of deployment of heavy support package units.

10. In addition, the killing of an Egyptian United Nations officer in El Fasher in May 2007 prompted many troop-contributing countries to place a restriction on the forward deployment of their staff officers from Khartoum. It is hoped that with the establishment of the UNAMID Interim Force and Police Headquarters, the moratorium will be soon lifted.

C. Hybrid Operation

11. With regard to the deployment of UNAMID, in resolution 1769 (2007), paragraph 5, the Security Council set the following benchmarks: (a) no later than October 2007, UNAMID to establish an initial operating capability for the headquarters and establish financial arrangements to cover troop costs for all personnel deployed to AMIS; (b) as of October 2007, UNAMID to complete preparations to assume operational command authority over the light support package, personnel currently deployed to AMIS and heavy support package and hybrid personnel by the transfer of authority; and (c) no later than 31 December 2007, UNAMID to assume authority from AMIS.

12. In accordance with resolution 1769 (2007), initial operating capability for UNAMID headquarters was established in October 2007. As indicated in my most recent 30-day report (S/2007/653) dated 5 November, AMIS force headquarters has been reorganized as part of preparations for the transition to UNAMID. In this regard, staff structures are now in place to support a three-sector structure and the focus continues to be on preparing for the transfer of authority while continuing current operations. The rotation of AMIS forces also continues on schedule, including the deployment of additional battalions from Nigeria and Rwanda to the mission area.

13. The appointments of key senior staff, including the Joint Special Representative, his deputy, the Force Commander and his deputy, the Police Commissioner and one of his deputies, the Military Chief of Staff and all sector commanders and deputy sector commanders have been completed in consultation with the African Union.

14. The reimbursement of AMIS troop-contributing Governments began in mid-November 2007 for the month of October 2007. In addition, the proposed budget for UNAMID for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 (A/62/380) was reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in mid-October 2007 and was presented to the Fifth Committee on 8 November 2007. As noted in my previous report (S/2007/653), as an exceptional measure outlined in my letter dated 2 October 2007 to the President of the General Assembly (A/62/379), substantial support to AMIS under the heavy support package provisions has been financed through the temporary use of resources of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS). Upon approval by the General Assembly of the budget for UNAMID, expenditures incurred by UNMIS in support of AMIS will be reimbursed by UNAMID.

15. With regard to the force composition of UNAMID, as I noted in my previous report, the United Nations and the African Union have received contributions from Member States towards most of the ground-troop capabilities required for UNAMID. The actual deployment of these capabilities requires the completion of ongoing predeployment preparations; logistical support and facilities, including the identification of land; and a clear indication of the Government of the Sudan that these contributions to the implementation of resolution 1769 (2007) are welcome. Subject to these factors, advance elements of the first three infantry battalions of UNAMID are expected to be deployed in January 2008.

16. At the same time, the process of generating aviation and transportation units has not been successful. Three weeks before the transfer of authority, UNAMID is

still short of pledges for one heavy and one medium ground transport unit, three military utility aviation units (18 helicopters in total) and one light tactical helicopter unit (6 helicopters). These capabilities are indispensable not only for the timely deployment of UNAMID, but also for the implementation of its mandate. The lack of helicopters is of particular concern. As I explained to the Security Council in my letter dated 6 December, UNAMID must be capable of rapid mobility over large distances, especially over terrain where roads are the exception. Without the missing helicopters, this mobility — a fundamental requirement for the implementation of the UNAMID mandate — will not be possible.

17. In identifying troop contributors, the United Nations and the African Union have focused on ensuring that they have the required capabilities to perform their mandated tasks and are able to deploy in a timely manner. The two organizations have also sought to assemble a balanced force that would unquestionably meet the "African character" criterion referred to in resolution 1769 (2007) and whose impartiality would be beyond reproach.

18. From among the pledges received, the African Union and the United Nations have put together a list in accordance with these priorities and transmitted it to the Government of the Sudan on 2 October. The Government however expressed reservations about certain non-African units in the force, including the infantry battalion from Thailand, the force reserve/special forces and sector reserve companies from Nepal and the Nordic engineering company. The United Nations and the African Union engaged in intensive consultations with the Government of the Sudan in order to address its concerns on this matter and to discuss issues related to the deployment of UNAMID. These consultations included high-level meetings in Addis Ababa in November, where the Government of the Sudan expressed its wish to see more African troops deployed in the early stages of UNAMID. To meet that concern, a special African Union/United Nations task force travelled to Cairo and Addis Ababa, accompanied by Sudanese Government officials, to ascertain the possibility of accelerating the deployment of UNAMID troops selected from Egypt and Ethiopia. The two countries confirmed that they would be able to accelerate the deployment of their selected battalions in January 2008.

19. The United Nations also sent a high-level team to meet with Sudanese officials in the margins of the European Union-Africa summit in Lisbon on 7 and 8 December to discuss issues related to the deployment of UNAMID. The meeting identified priority issues that were to be resolved at a follow-up meeting in Khartoum between the Joint Special Representative, Rodolphe Adada, and the national mechanisms established by the Government of the Sudan to facilitate the deployment and operations of UNAMID. The follow-up meeting took place on 11 December. During the meeting, the Government promised that it would inform the United Nations officially of its position regarding the Thai, Nepalese and Nordic units, but as of 19 December, it had yet to communicate its response. However, on several occasions, the Government has stated publicly that it would not accept the Nordic unit. Nevertheless, preparations for the deployment of the Thai battalion and the Nepalese and Nordic units are proceeding in anticipation of definitive feedback from the Government.

20. The meeting also addressed outstanding technical issues. The Government agreed, in principle, to give a blanket permission for night flying, on condition that

the United Nations would upgrade the airports in Darfur. The Government also made commitments to provide land for UNAMID sites in Geneina, but this has to be followed up by the identification of precise locations.

21. In the meantime, 830 civilian personnel have been deployed to Darfur and preparations for the deployment of all agreed military units continue, including 10 predeployment and reconnaissance visits in the last four weeks alone. The United Nations and the African Union worked tirelessly with troop- and police-contributing countries to have new UNAMID units deployed before the transfer of authority. It is standard practice, however, for deployment to occur following a sequence of predeployment visit, reconnaissance, negotiation of a memorandum of understanding and finally provision of the definitive and complete list of all personnel and equipment to be lifted into theatre. It is at the end of that process that the actual movement of men, women and material begins. The United Nations and the African Union are working with troop-contributing countries to accelerate these preparations, which must be carried out in partnership between the troop contributors and the Secretariat.

22. As part of the logistical preparations required for the support of UNAMID, the physical verification of AMIS assets and equipment in Darfur is under way so as to ascertain their condition and appropriateness in preparation for the transfer of authority to UNAMID. Strategic deployment stocks and other equipment and assets critical for the UNAMID deployment have been pre-positioned in El Obeid. I welcome the agreement of the Government of the Sudan that the El Obeid base be open for use by UNAMID. The base is being expanded to support the induction training and transit of up to 750 individuals.

III. Joint communiqué on the facilitation of humanitarian activities in Darfur

23. Following the signing on 28 March 2007 of the joint communiqué between the United Nations and the Government of the Sudan on the facilitation of humanitarian activities in Darfur, a high-level committee was established to ensure the effectiveness of humanitarian operations in Darfur. The committee is co-chaired by the Minister for Humanitarian Affairs and the UNMIS Deputy Special Representative, who is also the Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator for the Sudan.

24. The high-level committee met twice during the reporting period, in the first and third weeks of September. While administrative procedures for the delivery of humanitarian assistance have improved, the communiqué has been tested during the reporting period. The issue of the expelled Director of the Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE) has yet to be resolved, several humanitarian organizations in Northern Darfur have had difficulties renewing their travel permits, and non-governmental organizations' access to Kalma camp in Southern Darfur has been difficult.

25. In a disturbing development, on 4 November, the Governor of Southern Darfur transmitted a letter stating that the head of the Nyala sub-office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was being expelled on the grounds that he was not complying with the rules of the Humanitarian Act in the State. Of particular

concern was the publication of the stated justifications for the expulsion in Sudanese newspapers, despite the fact that Government officials in Khartoum had committed themselves to resolving the issue through established mechanisms between the Government and the United Nations. This action is in violation of the spirit of the communiqué.

26. While challenges to its implementation remain, the communiqué is an important tool to facilitate cooperation between the Government and the United Nations on the provision of humanitarian assistance, insofar as it commits the Government to the full and rapid implementation of the measures related to humanitarian activities included in the 2004 joint communiqué between the Government of the Sudan and the Secretary-General (the "Moratorium on Restrictions"). The Moratorium has been extended several times, and now expires on 31 January 2008. Unless the Moratorium is extended in a timely fashion, the 2007 joint communiqué will expire with it. In order to avoid an interruption of humanitarian assistance, the Moratorium and the communiqué must be extended immediately to allow time for humanitarian actors to renew visas and permits before the 31 January expiration date.

27. The humanitarian situation in Darfur continues to be volatile. In October alone, more than 20,000 civilians were displaced by armed clashes between Government forces and non-signatories to the Darfur Peace Agreement and among Darfur movements themselves, bringing the total number of people displaced in 2007 to almost 270,000. September health statistics from one health clinic in Southern Darfur showed a very high rate of sexually transmitted infections following attacks and fighting in August, with 183 cases reported to have been treated, including 40 cases in children under five.

28. Violence and tensions persist in camps for the displaced. The raids of Government forces and police into camps, as well as conflicts in and around the camps, have led to loss of life, destruction of shelters and the arbitrary detention of civilians. On 28 October, Government police officers and soldiers forcibly relocated hundreds of new arrivals from Kalma from the Otash camp in Nyala, Southern Darfur, without prior notice and in contravention of existing agreements between the Government, the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration. In early November, the Governor of Nyala announced his intent to disarm the camp forcibly. Joint Special Representative Adada and the Force Commander, General Martin Agwai, are involved in intensive discussions with the Government of the Sudan to explore ways to stabilize the camp in compliance with international humanitarian standards.

29. It is of grave concern that humanitarian workers are increasingly becoming targets of violence and armed robberies. In October alone, seven humanitarian personnel were killed in Darfur, the highest number in a single month since July 2006. In 2007, a total of 12 humanitarian workers have been killed, 15 wounded, 59 physically assaulted and 118 abducted during hijackings, while 75 humanitarian premises have been invaded by armed men. Owing to general insecurity or targeted attacks, humanitarian organizations have had to relocate on 31 occasions so far in 2007. Several United Nations staff members and convoys have been robbed en route to office premises and humanitarian sites. This year alone, 142 vehicles of United Nations and humanitarian agencies have been stolen throughout Darfur.

IV. Political process

30. As noted in my last 30-day report (S/2007/653), the Darfur peace talks opened in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on 27 October under the auspices of the United Nations and African Union Special Envoys for Darfur, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim. Those present at the opening session included a delegation from the Government of the Sudan, 18 representatives of non-signatory movements and representatives from civil society, including women. High-level representatives from the four regional partners (Chad, Egypt, Eritrea and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) and the wider international community were also present. However, a number of leading personalities of the non-signatory movements did not attend the opening session.

31. Following the opening session, which included two lively plenary debates, the African Union-United Nations Joint Mediation Support Team held closed meetings with the parties, regional partners and international observers to discuss the substantive issues to be addressed during the next stage of the negotiations or direct talks. These included matters related to security, power-sharing and wealth-sharing (including land) and humanitarian issues. The Support Team also dispatched a team to Juba and Darfur to hold consultations with those movements that remained outside of the Sirte process.

32. In the meantime, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in Juba assisted the movements in coalescing into two broad groups — 11 different faction representatives who have united as the Sudan Liberation Movement-Army (SLM-A) and five factions which have agreed to work together in the new United Resistance Front (URF). These two groups have pledged to coordinate their positions on the issues for the talks and to encourage those movements and personalities not present in Juba to join the unification process. In this regard, URF is travelling to Darfur to meet with its own constituency, field commanders and other factions, notably SLM-Unity. They then intend to return to Juba to finalize unification with the SLM-A "Group of 11". For its part, the "Group of 11" is of the view that full unification of the movements is necessary before they can participate in the substantive talks. The Special Envoys continue to believe that the movements should focus on unifying their positions and nominating a negotiation team rather than striving to achieve full unification as this may considerably delay the peace process.

33. While I welcome this latest development, I also recognize that other movement leaders, not least Abdul Wahid al-Nur of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and Khalil Ibrahim of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), remain outside the ongoing unification process. It is critical that all movements join the political process without further delay. Some movements have also insisted that the delegation of the Government of the Sudan be one of National Unity, with SPLM and Minni Minawi represented. The tensions between SPLM and the National Congress Party (NCP), as well as the stand-off between Minawi and NCP on the issue of Minawi's demand of separate representation at the talks, add to the difficulties. All efforts must now be made to ensure that these issues are resolved and that progress is achieved on implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

34. It is paramount that all parties commit themselves to an end to violence and a cessation of hostilities. Parties cannot talk and fight at the same time. In this context, I welcome the unilateral declaration of the Government of the Sudan of a cessation of hostilities during the opening session in Sirte. I call upon all parties to the conflict to make a similar commitment without delay. However, such commitments need to be translated into action on the ground. I am also concerned by reports of continuing violence by all sides, including recent bombardments by the Government of the Sudan.

35. In the weeks ahead, and in close cooperation and coordination with the regional partners (Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), the Special Envoys and their team will continue consultations with the parties in the Sudan and the region to prepare them for the substantive talks. They will also continue consultations with representatives of civil society in Darfur.

36. In addition and as I have said before, peace in the Sudan is indivisible, and lack of progress in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement could have implications for the peace process in Darfur. I was therefore concerned about the stand-off between NCP and SPLM which led to the recent suspension of participation by SPLM in the Government of National Unity. While it is encouraging that the two sides have continued their dialogue, leading to SPLM returning to the Government on 11 December, progress on key outstanding issues such as Abyei and demarcation of the 1956 boundary continues to be needed.

V. Implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement and the parties' compliance with their international obligations and their commitments under relevant agreements

37. The Ceasefire Commission remained paralysed during the reporting period, while fighting continued among different factions of rebel movements. Although the Commission met 16 times during this period, it was not able to agree upon steps to monitor and implement the ceasefire, partly owing to the fact that participating factions refused to address ceasefire violations unless the issue of the payment of mission subsistence allowance was resolved. Similarly, no significant progress was made during the reporting period on the power- and wealth-sharing aspects of the Darfur Peace Agreement.

38. With regard to the outstanding mission subsistence allowance owed to those members of Darfur rebel movements participating in the Ceasefire Commission, I am pleased to report that the African Union has identified funds to make final and conclusive payments. I have written to key donors who have pledged funds to the African Union Commission to cover associated costs, encouraging them to make these monies available as soon as possible so that this matter can be brought to a close. The payment of mission subsistence allowance to rebel movement participants in the Ceasefire Commission will not continue after the transfer of authority to UNAMID, making it all the more urgent that this issue be resolved as quickly as possible.

39. In preparation for the Sirte process, a consultative framework was established by the Preparatory Committee of the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation, through which representatives from civil society could provide input to the talks.

The Preparatory Committee is also preparing capacity-building workshops for civil society representatives.

VI. Ceasefire and security situation in Darfur

40. The reporting period has seen an increase in the level of violence in Darfur. In August, clashes between the Terjem and Rezeigat tribes resulted in the deaths of 100 civilians in Southern Darfur. Fighting between the Maaliya tribe and the Zaghawa group supported by SLM-Minawi broke out in Muhajeriya in August, killing 30 civilians and displacing about 10,000. In the last two weeks of August, armed clashes between the Salamat and Habaniya tribes south of Wed Ajam, Southern Darfur, inflicted heavy causalities on both sides. In October, Muhajeriya was attacked again by militiamen from the Maalya tribe; three local employees of non-governmental organizations were killed and some 20,000 civilians were forced to flee. These clashes are an indication of ongoing instability and inter-tribal tensions, particularly in Southern Darfur.

41. Armed clashes between Darfur movements and the Government of the Sudan have also continued during the reporting period. In August, an attack on local police in Adilla by a splinter faction of JEM and SLM-Unity led to the deaths of 20 police officers. Aerial bombardments by Government forces in Adilla in retaliation for the attack caused the displacement of 25,000 civilians. On 10 September, heavy fighting broke out between JEM/SLM-Unity and the Sudanese Armed Forces in and around Haskanita in Northern Darfur, killing a large number of Government soldiers. On 13 September, another rebel faction ambushed a Government convoy heading to Umm Baru, north-west of El Fasher, at two locations and at least nine Government soldiers and six SLM soldiers were reportedly killed.

42. On 24 November, a Sudanese Air Force aircraft attacked a village north of Garsilla, killing large numbers of civilians and livestock. On 5 and 8 December, the Sudanese Armed Forces bombed SLA and JEM positions in the area of Jebel Moon.

43. Moreover, the conflict in Southern Darfur threatens to spill over into the neighbouring western areas of Kordofan. Militant groups in this area have claimed to be allied with JEM, which in the reporting period claimed responsibility for attacks in Wad Banda (Northern Kordofan) on 29 August and Diffra (Southern Kordofan) on 24 October. On 24 October in particular, JEM announced that its forces had attacked the Defra oilfield in Kordofan and kidnapped two expatriate employees. Again on 11 December, Khalil Ibrahim said that his forces and local Arab tribesmen had attacked the garrison and oilfield in the Heglig area of Abyei, in a new attempt to broaden the conflict beyond Darfur.

44. On 1 August, a group calling itself the Democratic Popular Defence Forces and consisting of different Arab and non-Arab tribes took 12 soldiers hostage in Western Darfur. On 19 August, 40 to 50 militiamen attacked a police station near Al Salam Camp, killing three officers, injuring four and looting weapons and ammunition.

45. The reporting period also witnessed a shocking attack on the AMIS military group site in Haskanita on 29 and 30 September, which left 12 peacekeepers dead. As noted in my last 30-day report (S/2007/653, para. 8), the preliminary results of an investigation initiated by the AMIS Force Commander immediately after the

attack suggest that it was conducted by rebels entering the camp in vehicles bearing the inscription "JEM". The motive of the attack appears to have been looting of AMIS logistical equipment. The report of an ongoing joint African Union-United Nations investigation is expected to be issued in December.

VII. Observations

46. Four months into the implementation of Security Council resolution 1769 (2007), the primary goal of the United Nations and the African Union remains that of having a mission which is able to effectively implement the mandate given by the Security Council and which is capable of making a positive impact on the lives of the people of Darfur. The progress made towards this goal is still modest. At the transfer of authority UNAMID will have at its disposal essentially the same assets which are currently on the ground for AMIS. Consequently, in its early phase, UNAMID will still have limited capacity to bring about the desired early effect on the situation on the ground, and on the lives of the population of Darfur. In addition to the limited numbers, the Mission will lack the critical aviation capabilities I have described earlier in this report.

47. Furthermore, the Government does not appear to have fully embraced the fact that a robust and effective UNAMID will contribute towards Darfur's long-term stability. Also the continuing activity of the rebel movements, including the recent attacks on Government forces, oil installations and the AMIS Chief of Staff's vehicle, and the attacks on and hijacking of humanitarian vehicles all underscore the uncertain circumstances under which UNAMID will be starting its operations with limited capabilities.

48. Despite these challenges, every effort will be made to make maximum use of the resources and personnel on the ground. The force and police components will take a more forward-leaning posture. Patrolling, outreach to internally displaced persons, and support to the humanitarian community will all increase. Nevertheless, this change in approach cannot replace the thousands of troops and police officers and vital equipment which will not arrive until later in 2008. This is a particularly worrying scenario given the ongoing insecurity in Darfur, and the very strong possibility that the Mission will be tested by spoilers in the early stages.

49. In this context, and because time is against us, I reiterate my appeal to Member States for support in accelerating the deployment of selected units and filling outstanding gaps in force composition. As I stress the critical importance of these assets for the ability of UNAMID to perform its mandated tasks, it is important also to note that other options, including civilian contractors, have been considered and, given the current security situation in Darfur, are deemed unable to transport troops which may be required to respond to emergency security situations. In the light of the high expectations of the people of Darfur and given the complex mandate set out in resolution 1769 (2007), I believe that the international community cannot afford the risks associated with the deployment of a weak force to Darfur.

50. In addition to the acceleration of these processes, the successful deployment and effective functioning of the Mission will be highly dependent on the ability of the United Nations and the African Union to work with the Government of the Sudan to address and rapidly resolve the complex technical issues related to deployment. I welcome the meetings in Lisbon and the follow-up in Khartoum as

opportunities to engage with the Government and create momentum for our efforts to deploy UNAMID. I expect this positive engagement to continue and to deliver concrete results, since the establishment of a massive multidimensional peacekeeping operation cannot proceed without it.

51. It is my conviction that, once fully deployed, the peacekeeping force should help improve security conditions in Darfur and contribute to stability in the Sudan. However, it is only through political dialogue and inclusive consultations that the parties will be able to reach a viable, sustainable and comprehensive solution to the crisis. The United Nations and African Union Special Envoys, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim, have made every effort to engage all parties concerned in the process of finding a political solution to the crisis. While the merging of a number of rebel movements into two coalitions is a step forward, there is still an enormous amount of ground to cover. The parties must effectively address and move on from the ongoing focus on who will be at the table and turn their energies, with the support of the African Union-United Nations mediation, to the substance of the negotiations themselves. Only in this way will the outstanding grievances of all parties be addressed and the requirements for a lasting solution to the crisis identified.

52. Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the brave men and women of the African Union Mission in the Sudan, the humanitarian community in Darfur, Joint Special Representative Adada, and the men and women who have deployed to Darfur as part of the light and heavy support packages for AMIS for their tireless work to support the people of Darfur and bring an end to this tragic chapter in the Sudan's history.